

# Prospectus Instructions

All applicants are required to send 20 printed copies of the Prospectus and an electronic copy on a flash drive.

In the pages that follow are several guiding questions for the 30-page narrative. Below is a list of the Prospectus contents, as well as directions for meeting the format requirements and deadline.

## Contents of the Prospectus

The Prospectus must contain the following items:

- Cover page: name and location of proposed school;
- Information sheet (please see Appendix 2, page 42);
- Table of Contents listing page numbers for each section of the narrative and attachments;
- A narrative, not to exceed 30 pages, following the attached Prospectus Narrative Outline;
- Information regarding the applicant's designated representative (as stated in the Letter of Intent), and governance and management team (please see Appendix 1, page 41, for an outline of the leadership information guidelines);
- Attachments, not to exceed 50 pages;
- Educational Service Provider questionnaire (if applicable);
- Conversion school questionnaire (if applicable);
- Five-year budget;
- Cash flow analysis for first fiscal year of operation; and
- Budget assumptions.

*Note: The narrative must follow the Prospectus Narrative Outline. Failure to do so may serve as grounds to reject an application.*

*Note: Several sections of the Full Application will ask for the same or similar information as the Prospectus. Further expansion of information will be required in the Full Application.*

The Mayor's Charter Schools Advisory Board will invite each applicant whose Prospectus substantially meets the criteria to submit a Full Application. The Mayor's Office will determine the date on which the Full Application must be received.

## Prospectus Format

The Prospectus should adhere to the following format:

- Prepared on white, 8.5" x 11" page;
- One-inch margins on all sides;
- Double-sided;
- No font smaller than 11-point;
- Paragraph formatting may not be more compact than standard single space; and
- Spiral bound (no binders, paper clips, or folders).

Note that the Information Sheet is provided in Appendix 2 of this application packet. This must be submitted along with the Prospectus.

The narrative of the Prospectus should be limited to the topics included in the *Prospectus Narrative Outline*. Additional information supporting the narrative may be included as attachments. Choice of attachments are up to the applicant, though they should be used to provide evidence, support a particular aspect of the Prospectus, or lend insight into the applicant and its governing board members or management personnel. Examples of attachments in the Prospectus include curriculum samples, academic standards, letters of support, financial statements, etc. All attachments should be numbered and clearly referred to by number in the Prospectus narrative.

The leadership information, IRS 501c3 application, By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, Educational Service Provider questionnaire, conversion school questionnaire, first-year operational cash flow analysis, and five-year budget do not count toward the 50-page attachment limit.

## **Prospectus Deadline**

The Prospectus must be received by the Office of the Mayor no later than noon on the date established by the Mayor's Office after the applicant submits the Letter of Intent. Please mail or hand-deliver 20 spiral-bound copies (without background check authorization forms), one clearly marked unbound original copy (with background authorization forms) and the document on a CD or flash drive (prospectus and attachments need to be in one document on the flash drive or CD) in one packet to:

Office of the Mayor  
2501 City-County Building  
200 E. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
Attention: Brandon Brown, Director of Charter Schools  
Tel: 317.327.3621

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all application materials, including the Prospectus, reach the Office of the Mayor by the established deadline. Failure to submit a timely Prospectus may serve as grounds to reject an application.

## **Prospectus Narrative Outline**

### **I. Vision**

#### **A. Mission**

- Explain the mission of your proposed charter school. Provide a clear and concise statement that defines the purposes and nature of the school. Your mission statement should (in one or two sentences) indicate what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree.
- Some schools also use their mission statement to (briefly) address how they will accomplish these things if methodology is a particularly important part of their vision.
- Your mission statement should be written for a general audience. Avoid jargon and technical terminology—parents and members of the community who wish to know more about the school should be able to read the mission statement and get a clear sense of your school and its vision.

- A mission statement that focuses on core elements and sets priorities will remind readers that you are responsible for following through on a very specific set of promises and that some aspects of school performance are more important than others.
- The prospectus should reference the mission throughout in order to explain how the plans for the school support the mission.

## **B. Need**

- Charter schools should provide innovative and autonomous programs that, among other things, serve different learning styles and needs of public school students and offer innovative choices.
- Explain the need for this particular school in the community it will serve and the need with regards to the target student population.
- Strong answers to this question should go beyond a simple analysis of school district statistics or a general discussion of school choice.

## **C. Goals**

- Central to the accountability system is the *Performance Framework*, which defines the core areas for which schools are accountable. This framework will measure school performance by indicators common for all schools chartered by the Mayor's Office. In addition, the *Performance Framework* leaves a placeholder for measuring the attainment of educational and organizational goals unique to each school.
- The Mayor's Office expects charter schools to have a detailed understanding of the Performance Framework, hold themselves accountable to the framework, and be able to objectively reflect on their performance.
- Using the Performance Framework, create goals that show how the school will be performing based on the framework in their fourth year (the high-stakes mid-charter review), and sixth year (in preparation for renewal in the seventh year). Additionally, utilizing questions 1.4 and 2.6 of the Performance Framework, create two school-specific goals.
- Using the format described in Appendix 4, summarize at least two important school-specific goals and associated measures in relation to each of the following two categories:
  - Educational performance; and
  - Organizational viability.
- Appendix 3 contains the information you will need to complete this section, including a summary sheet for recording all school-specific goals and assessments, instructions for completing the template for each goal, a copy of the template itself, and an example of a completed template for a single performance indicator. The Performance Framework can be found on our.

# **II. Educational Services Provided**

## **A. Educational Model**

- Describe the educational model of the proposed school. Include in this description a discussion of the instructional methods to be used.
- Explain the research that demonstrates that this approach will work with your anticipated student population.
- Describe the culture that will be developed in the school.

- Describe the school calendar (including the number of days the school will be in session), the daily hours of operation, and the way the school day will be organized for instruction, independent study, and extra- or co-curricular activities, if any. Please be as specific as possible.
- For illustrative purposes, summarize a day in the life of a typical student at your proposed school.
- Summarize a day in the life of a typical teacher at the proposed school (include the number of instructional hours, number of classes, number of planning hours, and other responsibilities at the school).
- Include, in an attachment, a detailed school discipline plan. Explain consequences for offenses and how they will be carried out. Please also explain how parents will be notified and kept in communication when disciplinary issues arise.

## **B. Curriculum**

- Provide a description of the curriculum that will be used by the school, including the objectives, content, and skills to be taught in the main subject areas at each grade level (or performance level, grade level, etc.) in your school.
- Do not provide a copy of the Indiana State standards in place of the school's curriculum.
- This section should clearly identify the curriculum that will be used at the school for each grade and subject.
- Provide a detailed timeline for the selection, development and implementation of the curriculum.
- If the curriculum will be developed by the school, please detail who on staff will be responsible for the development, what the development process will be, and where in the process you are currently.
- Identify the specific textbooks, teaching pedagogies, curricular programs and/or sequence that will comprise the schools' curriculum for all subjects and grade levels.

## **C. Assessment**

- Describe how student progress will be determined, measured and reported. As a starting point, charter schools in Indiana are subject to mandatory assessment and testing requirements applicable to all Indiana public schools.
- Please indicate whether, in addition to administering state-mandated standardized exams, the school will also use additional or multiple assessment tools to determine and report student progress.
- Explain why particular measures have been chosen, how baseline achievement data will be collected, in which subject or development areas such data will be collected, and which assessment tools will be used.

## **D. Special Student Populations**

- Describe the school's approach to educating children with limited English proficiency, children with special needs, students who enter below grade level and students who are academically advanced.
- Describe with specificity how the school will identify children with special needs, develop plans for their education, and monitor their progress.
- Explain why you have selected your procedures, the expectations of staff and families, as well as your methods of providing follow up and feedback data to all necessary stakeholders.
- Explain who will carry out these responsibilities— the school's staff or outside providers.
- If the school anticipates joining an existing cooperative (or partnering with some other entity) to provide special education services, describe what action, if any, you have taken toward that end.
- If outside vendors will be used, outline expectations and evaluation procedures for these vendors.

- Pursuant to federal (34 CFR Part 300) and state (511 IAC Article 7) special education regulations, describe the continuum of special education services (including related services) the school will make available to eligible students.
- Describe how topics related to exceptional learning needs will be embedded in professional development plans for all staff.
- Be sure to include staff structures, student to teacher ratios, and procedures for general and special education staff collaboration, roles, and responsibilities.
- Describe how the school's educational program will serve students with limited English proficiency. Include staffing and how the curriculum will be modified for English language learners.
- Describe how the school's educational program will serve students that enter the school below grade level. What specific supports will be available for these students?
- Describe how the school's educational program will serve students that are academically advanced. How will the school continue to grow advanced students, while at the same time, working with students that are below grade level?

### **III. Organizational Viability and Effectiveness**

#### **A. Enrollment/Demand**

- Indicate the number of students that will be enrolled each year in each grade level. Explain in detail your rationale for selecting this particular school size, and provide specific evidence that the demand for your school is sufficient to sustain projected enrollment figures.
- If a survey is conducted to assess the demand for the school, include copies of surveys, response rates, and outcomes of the surveys.
- Summarize the recruitment process and explain how the school and its program will be publicized and marketed throughout the community as you seek to attract students to your school.
- Explain exactly what the school's enrollment process will be, including how the school will allocate seats if demand exceeds capacity.

#### **B. Governance and Management**

- Describe the organizational structure of the proposed school.
- If the board is contracting with an educational service provider, please include answers to the questions in the Educational Service Provider questionnaire in Appendix 2.
- Include copies of the following organizational documents
  - Organizational chart;
  - Articles of incorporation;
  - By-laws; and
  - Evidence that the applicant has been determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be operating under not-for-profit status or evidence that the applicant has applied for said status.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's leader(s), the board, and other key personnel.
- If the school leader is not yet selected, describe in detail the criteria for the selection of a high-quality leader.
- Describe the process by which the governing board will develop policies and make decisions.
- Briefly detail your development plans for board members.
- Provide a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the board in relation to the school's leader(s), and educational service provider, if applicable. Discuss the role distinctions as they relate to curriculum, personnel decisions, budget allocation, and vendor selection. Explain the process for selecting staff.

- Attach leadership information (resumes and memoranda) for members of the Board of Directors. At this point, your Board should be finalized.
- Attach leadership information for your school's leader(s) and any other staff that have been identified; if not yet identified, explain the process that will be used to find a high-quality leader(s) and staff. See Appendix 1 for more information.
- Information on Board members and the school's leadership will not be considered complete unless leadership information (resume, background waiver, and memorandum) as detailed in Appendix 1 is provided. The leadership information attachments will not count toward the 50-page limit for attachments.
- If any other individuals have been integral to the development of the school, clarify their future role with the school.

Signed background check authorization forms, with social security numbers, must only be included in the unbound original copy of your Prospectus. Do not include background check authorization forms in spiral-bound copies of the Prospectus.

### **C. Community Partnerships**

- Provide a list of organizations that will partner with your school and the nature of those partnerships.
- Attachments should include letters of support from partner organizations, specifically detailing the nature of the partnerships.
- Describe the steps you have already taken to develop partnerships and your plans to further develop additional community partnerships.
- See Appendix 2's community partnership chart for an example of how to present this information.

### **D. Budget and Financial Matters**

- Provide the school's estimated costs and revenues from the school's pre-operational start up phase through the fifth year of operation, including assumptions behind revenue and expenditure projections.
- A sample five-year budget template is included in this packet in Appendix 2.
- Budget assumptions should be highly detailed, explaining the rationale for each line item within the budget. (For example, details regarding average staff salary, costs for materials and supplies, rent and/or construction costs, technology, etc. should be explained thoroughly.) Provide assumptions for both revenue and expenditures. Provide detail for each line anticipated expense or revenue, explaining the basis for your assumption.

Prospectuses submitted without detailed budget assumptions will be rejected.

- In addition, provide a cash flow analysis for the first fiscal year of operation. (Note that all budget analyses should assume a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.) Remember that it is prudent to be conservative in your assumptions for the amount of funding you expect to receive per pupil.
- In the budget, you should only include those grants or in-kind donations which have already been firmly committed.
- A letter of commitment from funders must be included in the attachments for any fundraising revenue.
- If you are planning to pursue certain grants or donations but have not yet received a commitment for these contributions, do not include them in your budget – instead, provide a description of these potential contributions in your narrative (including the source, estimated amount of contribution, and expected date of receipt if known).

### **E. Facility**

- If you have already identified a charter school facility, indicate the location (including street address and school district).
- Describe the facility, including whether it is new construction or part of an existing building.
- If possible, provide a layout and description of the proposed charter school facility.
- If a facility has not been selected, indicate any existing possibilities and the process that will be used to find a suitable facility.

#### **F. Transportation**

- The intent of the Mayor's Office is that schools receiving charters from the Mayor must be open and accessible to all students.
- Given that intention, provide a detailed description of the transportation arrangements made for charter school students, including arrangements made for students who would not have their own means of transportation.
- While it is understood that you may be unable to provide an exact transportation plan without knowledge of your actual student population, please be as specific as possible.